

SNACKS THAT COUNT

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND CONSULTATION FOR CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

Did You Know?

For healthy growth and development, children need snacks and fluids between meals.

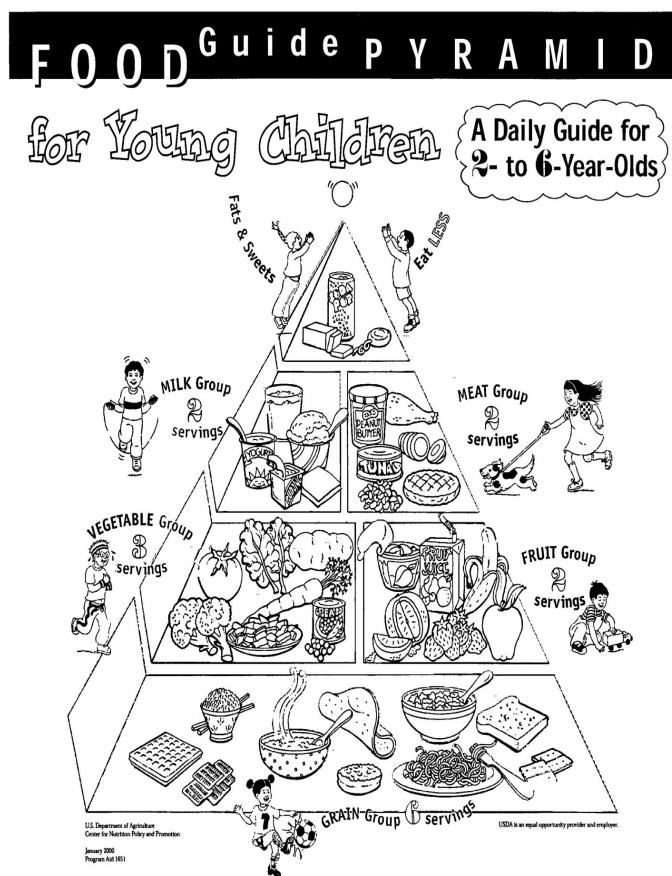
- Snacks should be part of the daily meal plan.
- Snacks can provide additional energy that children need to avoid late-morning and mid-afternoon slumps.
- Snacks should be carefully planned to be nutritious and age appropriate.

Why do children need snacks?

- Children's bodies have a constant need for energy replacement.

- Children's stomachs are not large enough for them to eat enough at each meal to last all the way to the next meal.
- Snacks between meals allow children to meet their basic level of calories necessary to grow, think, and play.
- Ample fluid intake throughout the day can help avoid dehydration of the child's body.

Mid-morning and mid-afternoon snacks should be considered an extension of breakfast and lunch. Nutrients missed during mealtime can be added to a child's diet at snack time. This is why it is important to carefully plan nutritious snacks. Healthy snacks served approximately 2 hours before the next meal usually will not affect an active child's appetite.



WHAT COUNTS AS ONE SERVING?

Grain Group

1 slice of bread
1/2 cup of cooked rice/pasta
1/2 cup of cooked cereal
or
1 oz. of ready-to-eat cereal

Fruit Group

1 piece of fruit or melon wedge
3/4 cup of juice
1/2 cup of canned fruit

1/2 cup dried fruit

Meat Group

2 or 3 ounces of cooked lean meat, poultry or fish
1/2 cup of cooked dry beans,

1 egg counts as 1 ounce of lean meat
2 tablespoons of peanut butter counts as 1 ounce of meat

Vegetable Group

1/2 cup of chopped raw or cooked vegetables

Milk Group

1 cup of milk or yogurt
2 ounces of cheese

Fats and Sweets

Limit calories from these

Four- to 6-year-olds can eat these serving sizes. Offer 2-to 3-year-olds less, except for milk. Two- to 6-year-old children need a total of 2 servings from the milk group each day.

Great Snack Choices Add Up

Variety is the key. Varying choices increase the chances of getting all the nutritional benefits from food.

SOME IDEAS FOR SNACKS

Fruit Group

Apple ring sandwiches
[peanut butter on apple rings]
Tangerine section
Chunks of banana or pineapple
Canned fruits packed in juice
Juice box [100% juice]

Meat Group

Hard cooked eggs [wedges or slices]
Peanut butter spread thin on crackers
Bean dip spread thin on crackers

Grain Group

Crackers stacks--wheat crackers spread with cheese spread
Ready-to-eat cereals
Flavored mini rice cakes or popcorn cakes
Breads of all kinds [multi-grain, rye, white, wheat]
Ginger snaps or fig bars
Graham crackers
Popcorn
Ready-to-eat cereals mixed with raisins/other dried fruit

Vegetable Group

Vegetable sticks [carrot, celery, green pepper, cucumber
Celery stuffed with peanut butter
Cherry tomatoes cut in small pieces
Steamed broccoli, green beans, sugar peas with low fat dip

Milk Group

Milk shakes [made with fruit and milk]
Cheese slices with thin apple wedges
String cheese or individually wrapped slices
Mini yogurt cups



FOODS THAT MAY CAUSE CHOKING INCLUDE:

- frankfurters
- nuts and seeds
- popcorn
- raw carrots
- chunks of meat
- raisins
- marshmallows
- peanut butter (spoonful)
- chips
- whole grapes
- pretzels
- round or hard candy
- raw celery
- cherries with pits
- large pieces of fruit

Note: Use close supervision when young children are eating.



Snack Time Can be a Learning Experience

In addition to providing a significant part of the child's daily food intake, snack time offers many interesting and important learning opportunities. Here are some of those opportunities:

- To try new foods, and explore how they look, feel, sound, and smell.
- To develop ideas about different shapes, colors, textures, weights, amounts, etc.
- To develop social skills by talking and being with others.
- To discuss the science of food- how it is produced, how it is prepared, its importance to growth, etc.
- To develop a willingness to try different things through eating new foods.
- To learn age appropriate table manners.
- To share special events (birthdays, holidays, etc.).
- To share with one another food that they have prepared themselves.
- To enjoy a variety of foods.

Encouraging Good Food Habits

Young children feel more comfortable when things that they play with, work with, and eat are selected with their size and age in mind. Because a child's capacity for food is small, girls and boys need to eat often during the day.

Start with small servings of food in bite-size pieces that are easy to manage with a fork, spoon, or their fingers, and serve food lukewarm instead of cold. Give children the opportunity to ask for second helpings.

Like an adult, a child's appetite varies from day to day. It's a good idea to give children more food on days when they are extra hungry and less food on days they are not so hungry. Temporary food cravings are common for the young child; he or she may want the same food over and over again for a few days.

Snack time is a great opportunity to help children try new foods. It is best to introduce only one new food at a time and repeat it at a later date so that the child will recognize and learn to enjoy the food. Involve preschoolers and older children in cooking and food preparation; children are more likely to try foods that they helped prepare. Below is a list of creative ideas for snack that children can help prepare.

Ideas for Creative and Fun Snacks

Frozen Juice Pops - Pour 100% fruit juice into paper cups. Add a wooden craft stick when partially frozen; continue to freeze until completely frozen. At snack, the children can peel away the paper and enjoy!

Tropical Fruit Pops - Blend banana chunks, crushed pineapple, strawberries, and low-fat vanilla yogurt. Pour into paper cups; add a wooden craft stick to each. Freeze.

Fruity Dip - Blend 1 ounce carton of vanilla low-fat yogurt with 2 tablespoons of orange juice concentrate (You may also try grapefruit, tangerine, lemonade or limeade concentrate). Give each child a bowl for dipping and a variety of fresh fruit pieces (try melon balls, banana slices, berries, peaches, and pears).

Veggie Dip - Blend 2 cups of fat-free plain yogurt and 1 envelope (0.4 ounce) buttermilk salad dressing mix. Refrigerate 1 hour. Give each child a bowl for dipping and a variety of fresh vegetable pieces (try broccoli, cauliflower, zucchini, celery, cucumber, green pepper, etc.).

Meat & Cheese Roll-ups - Top a small, round flour or corn tortilla with pieces of lunchmeat and thinly sliced cheese. Starting at the edge of the tortilla, roll tightly. Makes a quick and easy sandwich.

Healthy Nachos - Children can cut small flour or corn tortillas into four triangular pieces using scissors that have been sterilized. The adult then bakes the tortilla pieces in the oven for 10-12 minutes, at 350°. Place shredded cheese and chopped green pepper on the tortilla pieces and bake in the oven at 350° for 4 minutes, or until the cheese is melted.

Tasty Celery Sticks - Wash and cut up celery stalks. Allow children to spread peanut butter, cream cheese (plain or flavored), or cheese spread in the inside groove of the celery, and enjoy!

Pumpkin/zucchini/carrot quick bread or muffins.

Source: "Nutrition and Your Health: Dietary Guidelines for Americans", 1995 edition [www.nal.usda.gov].

***Note:** This publication is used to assist providers in maintaining compliance with licensing rules regarding nutrition, specifically:
Rule 400.5110 (2) In child care centers, "Food served by the center shall be of sufficient quantity and nutritional quality to provide for the dietary needs of each child..."
Rule 400.1821 (1) In family and group day care homes: "Each child shall be provided with nutritional food to meet each child's need for growth and development."



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